How

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/2308928.

Rating:	General Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/M
Fandom:	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (2014)
Relationship:	April O'Neil/Raphael (TMNT)
Characters:	Raphael (TMNT), April O'Neil, Michelangelo (TMNT), Leonardo (TMNT)
Additional Tags:	Raphril - Freeform
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2014-09-15 Completed: 2014-10-24 Words: 6,830 Chapters: 3/3

How

by Evanscent

Summary

When April and Raphael fight, how does it effect everyone else?

Notes

Prompting... I imagine April wanted to write/report about the Foot Clan and Raphael would disapprove. What would come of that?

Chapter 1

How

Raphael hurled his Walkman across the room. It exploded against the wall like so much confetti, the plastic splintering into thousands of pieces. Everything, absolutely everything, reminded him of her. Even the music he listened to, the showers he took, the food that he ate, the couch he sat on, and the air he breathed reminded him of her. His bed smelled of her, the sofa full of memories that seeped out, the t-shirts and shorts left behind were hers, the food in the fridge given to them by her. Everything made him feel and think of her.

It had been forty eight hours since he had walked himself home from her apartment, backpack on his shoulder and lead in his heart. His emotions bubbled just under the surface of his roughened skin. He was raw and angry. She had kicked him out! She had picked up his belongings and tossed them out onto the fire escape, her arms crossed and her lips pursed. She was done talking to him. He had dug himself into a six foot hole and there was no climbing out of it at this point.

She wanted to write a column exposing the Foot Clan and Shredder, naming Karai and Sacks and effectively painting a target on her back. Raphael's reaction had been one of shouts, thrown hands and ground shaking stomps. He had wanted to tell her how unsafe it was to name the Foot Clan and that they would kill her. He couldn't keep her safe every day all day! She had to understand that she was dealing with forces that would likely roast her cat alive just to make her cry.

He wanted to explain how much she mattered to him and how it would break something in him that he had just discovered, something that filled him from head to toe, giving his heart a reason to beat and his lungs a reason to fill. But what had escaped him sounded more like, "Are you fucking stupid?!" And, "You are out of your mind if you think I'm gonna let you do that!"

The instant he said those things he realized what he had done. He had not explained himself well at all. He breathed and hung his head. His massive arms dropped to his sides. He didn't know how to make it better. "April…" he started. She didn't give him a chance. She flung open the window and deposited his things on the fire escape. No words were exchanged.

He left, without further argument and without an apology. He left, knowing he had hurt his own heart and not knowing if he could ever make it right. How could he explain to her in a way she would understand? She needed to be safe. She needed to be with him. She needed to forgive him. He didn't know if he could forgive himself.

If she got hurt… If he wasn't there to protect her… If he had to touch her, cold and lifeless, without the flush of her smile filling him, the reflection in her eyes, the flitting touches of her hands, her lips… Oh god, oh god. Nothing, nothing, would stop him from seeking revenge. He could feel his skin cooling with a shiver in sharp contrast to the blood that rushed, heated

with emotion, through his veins. If April was ever hurt he would watch the world burn around him with the pain he felt. Wouldn't he?

He remembered her falling. Her hair was flying around her. Her jacket billowed in the wind. Her face was written in terror. He had leapt – without so much as a glance to his brothers – to save her. He didn't care that much about what happened to him, he just needed to save her. A part of him knew that his brothers would be there, but that didn't matter nearly as much as keeping April safe. His hand wrapped around her wrist and he knew that he would do anything in the world to keep her alive. That moment, he knew he'd be willing to lay down his life to make sure she was smiling. I got you. I've got you, April. Hold on, I've got you. I won't let you go. No matter what. I'll keep you safe. I'll protect you. I've got you.

He sighed and sat on the edge of his bed. His eyes stung. His heart ached. Something in his body felt so wrong and he didn't have the slightest clue on how to make it feel right.

"Hey. Uh. Raph?" The youngest of the turtles, Michelangelo, stood in the sleeping area, fingertips of each of his hands tapping nervously against the other. Raphael regarded the other turtle with a cold indifference. Mikey should know that Raph was less than receptive right about now. "Could I talk to you for a sec?"

Raphael motioned to the sleeping area with a sweeping arm. It was a communal area, but Raph's attitude certainly filled any room his body occupied to the point the other members of his family regarded any room he was in as "his" room.

"I, uh, I know you had a fight with April and…"

Raphael immediately got to his feet and moved to exit the sleeping area through Michelangelo. The smaller turtle scrambled out of the way, his hands flailing in the air.

"Come on, man! I just wanted to ask if she was gonna be okay!"

His back still to young Mikey, Raph snorted, his footfalls as heavy as they have ever been as he moved away to any room that didn't have the orange clad turtle in it.

"I could, ya know, comfort her," slid in Mikey, his tone suggestive.

Raphael paused. He turned, slowly, regarding Michelangelo silently. The smug look that was painted on the younger turtle's face melted like ice caught in a fire storm.

If it were possible for a single look to cause explosions and spontaneous combustion, Mikey's head would have been smeared in sooty remains against the far wall.

"I mean work the Mikey Magic to make her smile again! That's all, man…"

Raph's insides churned with a riot of mixing emotions. Jealousy overpowered him and his lips pulled back as his throat vibrated in a low growl. Michelangelo should know not to touch something of his! A single fist clenched. It was large enough to crush a standard sized basketball, or a man's head. Part of him wanted to strangle the younger turtle for such impertinence.

Shame bubbled up through his throat. His breath caught. He had yelled at her. He had called her stupid. He had swore. He had stomped around like a raging lunatic in her home. The delicate creature that held his very heart in her tiny hands… he had hurt her. He cinched his eyes tightly shut. Perhaps Mikey would be better for April, anyway. Mikey wouldn't break things, yell, or hurt her feelings.

Mikey was jovial, funny, exuberant and full of love of life. He was adventurous, spontaneous, and optimistic. He was everything Raphael wasn't. Raph felt his shoulders sink and the tension drain away. Guilt and shame rose through him, drowning his jealousy and rage with the cold realization that he may never be able to fix things with April.

"Yeah… You do that," he breathed, uncaring if Mikey heard him or not. He turned away, eyes downcast, his stomach clenching with the thought of the younger turtle coaxing even a smile from those red lips he craved so much.

He was so ashamed of his behavior. He was always so violent. He was always so loud. He was always such a… a… hothead! He was confident he terrified her into the decision that he was nothing but trouble. He was too massive, too moody, too stupid and too abrasive to be able to care for such a kind, lovely woman like her. She pushed him out of her apartment for her safety. He was a liability. He was an accident waiting to happen.

By seventy two hours, his mood had turned so dour, it felt as though he had a rain cloud of darkness following him permanently. His mood was so black, even Donnie had visibly shied away from the red garbed turtle. He no longer ate with the others and chose to forgo the bath, the shower, and his bed for the weight room and the dojo. It was Leonardo that approached him next.

Sweat that had clung to his arms was flung to the floor as he finished his kata for the umpteenth time. He tugged on his headband, tightening the knot that threatened to slip from his slick skull. He felt like he needed his armor now more than ever. He had showed himself… every inch of himself… to someone and now he had hurt them terribly. She probably thought he was uglier than ever.

The attack had come more swiftly than Raphael had anticipated. What truly surprised him was the fury with which Leonardo wielded his weapons. He was immediately on defense and losing ground at an alarming rate. The sounds of clashing metal hissed and crashed in the air. Raphael found himself on one knee, his sais crossed overhead, blocking his brother's twin katana blades that shivered with tension inches from his skull.

Raph looked up. Leonardo's mouth was pulled into a smug smirk. The smirk of victory and arrogance that he gave Raph every time he knew he was right and Raph was wrong. It was that self-righteous look of superiority that struck every last nerve of Raph's limited patience and understanding. He hated that look. He wanted to make sure Leo could never make that face ever again.

Raphael launched himself up, tossing Leo away. He advanced and began a flurry of blows that drove Leo back. He was regaining his lost ground. "I'm gonna wipe that smirk right off your face, Fearless!" he hissed, spitting out his nickname for the Blue Leader. Raph could

feel his bones and muscles vibrating with his efforts. It felt amazing. It felt phenomenal. It had been too long.

“I’d like to see you try, big guy,” Leo shot back, his voice still as smug as his god damned face. Sweat beaded down his brow, darkening the bright blue mask to a deeper hue; the hue of determination and perseverance. Raphael wanted to choke him with it.

Incensed, Raph doubled his efforts, attacking ceaselessly, recklessly. He landed a blow and one of Leo’s katanas clattered to the floor. The sound was sweet victory to Raphael. He laughed and felt more alive than he had in days. He was beating his ridiculous Leader. He was taking down Fearless and he was going to enjoy it.

With a single katana, Leo deepened his stance, the blade glittering as he held it in front of him and waited while Raph gloated. “You think that you can beat me?”

“I don’t think, Leo. I know. You wanna give up now? Before I crush you?”

“Bring it.”

Raphael attacked with the sensation he had all ready won. He knew his brother was good with two katanas, but he had forgotten how precise he was with a single blade. One sai was torn from his hand and the point buried hard into the far wall, leaving the weapon lodged there. Blood dripped down his thumb on his now empty hand.

“You’re gonna pay for that,” Raphael promised huskily. He ignored the wound; it was barely a surface scratch after all.

“Show me,” Leonardo stated.

Again, Raphael attacked. He was armed with only one sai. Although he was accustomed to two, he wasn’t helpless with only one. He managed to pin Leo’s sword down for a moment and reached through to punch his brother square in the mouth. Leo was bloodied, but not staggered.

Leo tossed Raph away, each turtle gripping their weapon tightly. “Is this how it’s gonna be now?”

Raph side stepped, moving his brother with him in a slow circle, “Me kicking your ass? Always has been. Always will be.”

“You, being such the unthinking jerk, that you ruin every good moment and happy thought we all have.”

“The fuck you yammering about, Leo? Come at me, bro. Less talk. More fight.”

Leo advanced, his sword swinging slow and low. Raph easily blocked it all, his face wrenched up into a smile as the two faced off. “And when one of us has a single shot at something more than this life, you get it. You! You get it! And what do you do? You fuck it up. You can’t just be happy, can you? You have got to just open your mouth and ruin it.”

Raph staggered back against the weight of his brother, his heart freezing in his chest. Leo took his chance to turn into his brother's grasp and punch him square in the jaw. With another turn, his elbow buried deep in Raph's plastron, right at his stomach. The red clad turtle felt the air rush from his lungs and he again found himself on one knee.

Eyes narrowed, chest heaving as he attempted to breathe, Raphael glared up at Leo who was sheathing his katana, "You're always thinking about only yourself." Leo bent to retrieve his other katana. "You always open your mouth before you think." He calmly pulled the sai from the dojo wall. He tossed it at Raph's knee; it skid to a stop before the downed turtle. "It's not too late. Fix it, numbskull. Fit it now." He pointed his blade at Raph before exiting, his body stiff with an emotion Raph was hard pressed to name. "You think you're the only one who loves April?"

Raphael knelt, alone and panting, in the dojo. He tasted blood. His eyes stung. His hand had since stopped dripping. "I don't know how," he said to no one in particular.

He didn't know how, but he knew he needed to. Now.

Chapter 2: How... Continued

Chapter Notes

A reviewer had asked if I was going to continue the story... I hadn't planned on it, but, ya know... Here it is! Thank you so much for taking the time to leave such a lovely note!

I have no idea how I feel about this chapter. It just kinda spilled. I can't say if it's right or wrong. I know it needs a fine toothed comb on it, but what else?

The sky had been as black as Raphael's mood. It was a collection of dark, boisterous clouds that threatened to let loose all the powers of Hell and the wrath of any and all gods above. As Raph rose to the surface world, the sky began to break. Light sprinkles of rain fell to earth. The first few drops splashed on the hulking turtle's all ready damp head. It was cool, refreshing, a change from the sweat and blood that he had lived in.

His heart felt like it was pushing loose a clot of misery. The cavity of his chest ached as the dread and anger dripped away, washed down with the sensation of acceptance and hope. He felt as though the rain, fresh and clean, scrubbed his soul, his darkness and his fear. He could feel, as the sprinkling raindrops became thicker, denser, louder, that his body was thrumming with the idea that forgiveness just might be possible.

Hope. He had hope that April might be able to listen to him. She might be able to give him a chance to explain. Explain that he was wrong. Wrong in how he spoke to her, wrong in that he didn't share his fear, his rationale, and his desire to keep here safe above all else in the world.

He climbed the buildings swiftly, his feet taking him to April's silently. He was attempting to formulate what he could say to her. He was trying to piece together what he needed to say, that he should have said before. His hands moved with the motion of his whispered words, his body on autopilot as he made his way to the apartment he didn't even realize he missed.

His talk with Leonardo had swept Raph into motion. Without pausing, he made his way from the sewers toward the one thing that scared him most in his life: he had to talk to April. He had to make himself clear. He had to find out if he had really screwed his relationship with her.

Leo. Absently, the turtle thanked his brother. Well, not to Leo's face. He would never actually thank Leonardo for understanding just how to deal with Raphael's thick skull. But he felt grateful that Leo knew him well enough to get him out of his rut and to knock him around a bit. Actions spoke louder than words and Raph was a turtle of action.

He was on the roof of her building. He gazed down over the side, his mind imagining himself on the fire escape, April's arms wrapped around him as she tugged him inside, so excited to see him again and wanting nothing more than to make up and possibly even make out. Make up. Yeah. Make up is good.

He felt light headed. His heart was pumping rapidly. His skin felt as though it had a low current of electricity humming through it. She'd forgive him. She would listen. He would be able to explain everything and it was be like it had never happened. She would understand every last fear in his heart and she would make it all better.

Raphael rolled his massive shoulders. He clenched his hands. He discovered he was suddenly more nervous about this moment than he had ever been. He just needed to talk to her. That was simple, right? He felt time like a burden of rocks on his body, weighing him down. He had no idea how long he stood there, waiting for his body to calm down.
The sky rolled the clouds over Raphael's head, casting him in darkness as the sun fell victim to the horizon. The night was filled with the sounds of water – falling, splashing, pooling, crashing. Drops pinged down the railings of the fire escape, the sound feeling like they echoed in his ears as he slowly climbed down the steps toward the warm home of the women whom possessed his heart.

He squat on her level, the dark window of her living room reflecting his image. He was soaked. He was massive. He was green. He grimaced. Raphael always had a difficult time with his image. He never felt as though he was attractive or handsome, as those were qualities you could not obtain as a seven foot tall talking turtle. He was equally as difficult to deal with visually as he was emotionally – all strength and suddenness, no tact or precision.

The darkness could not hide the ridges of his scales, the thick scars on his arms and face, or the stark differences in his limbs from that of a human: two fingers and a thumb. Two toes. Two nostrils, no protruding nose. Ears holes without the ears. Gigantic teeth. Thick lips. Let's not mention the obvious… a tail and a giant god damned shell on his back.
What the fuck was April doing with him?

"What the fuck was I thinking?" he ground out into the dark. He lifted his head, eyelids closed, and let the rain wash over him. "She don't deserve this." Raph resigned himself to the emotions that flooded through him. He was ugly and awful. She didn't need to be with someone like him.

The curtains at the window were tossed open and the window followed. "Get in here," he heard her say. She had since moved away from the window and into her apartment. "Now!" she called out.

Raphael swallowed. He could feel his Adam's apple bobbing with the work of it. He stepped into April's dimly lit apartment and suddenly felt more like a stranger than he had ever been in her home. He dripped water onto her carpet and stood directly inside the window. April was nowhere to be seen. He glanced around. Nothing seemed different.
The lights were off. The only source of light was a row of candles lit at her kitchen bar top. Everything was like it was when he left. Except him. She didn't miss him. Why would she?

April rounded the corner from her bathroom and tossed a towel at him. He caught it easily enough and an eyebrow ridge lifted. She kind of threw it a bit forcefully. Jesus. But he took the hint and began to dry himself off.

He kept his eyes on her while he toweled off. She stood, her arms crossed, her lips as pursed as they last time he saw them, and her eyes locked on his. She waited for him to be mostly dry and she motioned to the sofa. “Sit.”

Raphael paused. Most of the time when he was here, he didn’t have his gear on. He felt oddly overdressed and was unsure if removing it would be appropriate. Did taking it off mean he was too comfortable? Did it mean he was assuming things? Was leaving it on rude?

“Sit.” The impatience was palpable.

With a flick of his wrists, Raph pulled his sais from their sheaths and placed them on the coffee table. He chose to not sit on the sofa with his damp gear and instead knelt on the towel at the coffee table.

April huffed a bit but found herself a seat on the sofa, facing him. “I’m listening.”

Raphael’s eyes widened and he looked at her. His mouth opened, but nothing came out. He looked away and down at his hands; his large, green, inhuman hands. Where were all those words he had wanted to give her? I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I’m sorry!

A knot in his stomach began to climb up his body. It clenched in his chest. It rattled in his throat. His eyes cinched shut. His teeth bit at the inside of his mouth. Something powerful was happening inside him and he wasn’t sure he was going to be able to contain it. It felt as though something was growing in him, something fueled by the bubbles that traveled through his stomach and his into his blood. Everything tingled and grew; grew to the point he couldn’t hold it any longer.

“You… you don’t deserve me,” he whispered. “I ain’t good enough.” His eyes burned. He wasn’t sure, but he couldn’t see his hands as well as he could a moment earlier. The emotion that churned through him felt like it was pouring out.

April was quiet, but her voice unwavering. “You don’t get to decide what I do and do not deserve, Raphael.”

His eyes lifted again. He regarded her, not understanding what she was saying. He sniffed and made a loud, snerking sound. Somehow, his nose had started to run. Must be the weather.

“You also don’t get to decide what I can and can’t do.”

He nodded automatically. He felt something wet trickle down his cheek. Must still be wet from outside. “I- I just… I just…” He looked away, his hands raked down his face. “I gotta keep you safe. Don’t you get it? If you got hurt… if I lost you… April. I don’t know… I don’t know what that would do to me…”

“Raphael. Look at me.” She had moved near him, her knees nearly touching his leg as she got as close to him as she could without contact.

He turned slightly, his head still down, his eyes refusing to meet hers. Her hand cupped his cheek. He felt himself shiver all over. Her touch felt like it was made of all things magic. His skin felt warmed, his heart filling and beating, throwing bursts of the magic through his body. “April,” he breathed. God, he missed her. He could smell her – the subtle scent of her body wash on her skin, the warmth of her touch, the tiny size of her hand – he missed every moment he could hear, see, and smell something of her.

“Raphael,” she whispered. He allowed his face to be turned toward her.

When his eyes met hers, he understood that every ounce of pain he had endured in the last seventy hours was felt by his partner. She suffered as he did. His mouth opened, his throat worked, but no sound escaped him.

Her dark eyes turned into pools, shimmering with the building of unshed tears. “You idiot,” she sighed, her hand smoothing up from his cheek to his skull, tugging away his bandana and effectively pulling away his armor. She pulled him into her as she rushed forward to wrap her arms around him.

His bandana abandoned on the floor and her arms wrapped tightly, Raphael let loose the torrent of emotion that had filled him and controlled him. His shoulders shook gently as he breathed in and out through his mouth, forehead pressed between April’s breasts. His fear, his anger, his anxiety had all culminated into this single moment; the moment he knew he had broken both their hearts and had now begun to heal them.

“Don’t you dare,” she whispered to him as she held him tight. “Don’t you ever say that I don’t deserve you.” She kissed every inch of his flesh she could reach, her hands gently stroking down the ridge of his carapace and the grooves of the plates. “It’s you I chose. It’s you I want. It’s you, Raphael.” Her tears fell from her cheeks to his head. She kissed them away. “Don’t you ever walk away from me again,” she grit out, trying to sound as firm as she could through her tears.

His arms encircled her, tugging her closer. He pulled her into his lap and buried his face deeper into her chest. He wanted to nuzzle into her bare flesh, loving the way her warmth surrounded him, her scent filled him. He wanted to be as close to her as possible. He moved her effortlessly in his lap, draping her legs on either side of him, pressing her belly to his torso. He felt her heels press into his shell as she hugged him as fiercely as he held her.

“Raphael?” she asked, wanted to be able to look him in the eyes. She needed to explain. She needed to talk.

He wasn’t sure if he was ready to lift his head. He had rekindled his love for his new home: her heartbeat in his ears, her skin pressed to his face, her warmth surrounding him, her scent coursing through him. He could feel himself settle and the storm of emotion that had fueled him for so long ebb like the tide.

She tugged on his shoulders, her hands pressing firmly. He wasn't going to get a choice right then.

He lifted his head, eyes seeking out hers in the dim light. He didn't trust his voice though he knew he had calmed the riot inside him. He gazed up at her, the flickering lights behind her casting her in an ethereal glow; she seemed positively angelic.

"Take me to bed, Raphael. I need you against me tonight. I need to know that you'll be there, right there, when I wake up. I need to be able to touch you. I need you."

He got to his feet as commanded, her arms remained draped over his shoulders, legs wrapped around him as best as she could manage. "There's still more… I need… I need…" His voice was a thick whisper, his throat working through the words. He had so much more to pour out to her. He needed to explain to her all the millions of things he felt she needed to know. I need you to be safe. I need you…

"Not tonight. Tonight I need you to hold me." Tears, tears she thought she was would never be done giving him, fell down her cheeks.

Raphael felt as though he had suddenly climbed to the peak of Olympus and became a god. He stiffened, not recognizing the sense of rawness that tore through him. It was something to work out soon. But not now. Right now, the woman of his dreams wanted nothing more than to be held by him and him alone. Right now, he felt like he was perfect because she wanted him just the way he was.

A/N: THE FEELS. I CAN'T TELL IF IT'S GOOD OR BAD THERE IS SO MUCH FEELS.

Chapter 3: The Talk

Chapter Summary

The Talk... It happens.

Chapter Notes

Raphael finally gets it off his chest.

Raphael woke with the rising sun. He immediately realized he was not sleeping in his typical bed in the sewers and was more grateful for that than he had ever been. He had thought that perhaps the days of waking in a home above ground, with the sun, April lying next to him were long gone. He had lost something he never realized he truly enjoyed and it had hurt more than he thought it could.

He breathed in deeply. The scent of his lovely lady filled him, tingling him right down to his very toes. He cracked his eyes open and gazed down at her still sleeping face. Her pink lips were parted, hair in disarray, her head resting on the shoulder of his arm that stretched out across her pillow. Her arms were tucked against his plastron, her legs tangled at the ankle with his calves. She had worn an oversized t-shirt to bed and it had since ended up on the floor at some time during the night. He savored every last inch of her bare skin pressed against his.

He could not stop the smile that filled his face. He felt lighter, happier, even more cheerful, just by knowing she was near. A sense of wonderment settled into him as he gazed at her. How on Earth did such a beautiful, kind, amazing woman like her ever let a… a… turtle like him in her life?

Sighing, he pressed a kiss to her forehead. She awoke, her mouth opening in a wide yawn. “Raphael?” Her hands reflexively reached out for him, hands gripping at his chest. Having found him, a lazy grin slid across her face. “Mmm… Raphael…” Her tone was one of deep satisfaction. Her legs moved to rub against his.

“Mornin’ beautiful,” he breathed into her hair, his free hand stroking down her shoulder.

She snuggled into him, her face burying in his throat. “Thanks for staying. I missed you.”

“I missed you, too.” He favored her forehead with another soft kiss. Although this moment was completely wonderful, he knew there was still more to talk about. He knew the moment

couldn't last when it weighed on him. He took a deep breath, steeling his nerves for what he knew he needed to say, for the things he didn't say the night before. He released his breath with a sigh and his grip on her inadvertently tightened. "April…" he began, unconsciously fearful that she would leave.

"Shhh…" she whispered against his neck. "Not yet. I just want to savor this… mmm… more. I need this."

A thrill of embarrassment flashed through him. He felt his cheeks heating and his toes curling. His hand moved from her shoulder to drift down her back. He pressed her against him. For the moment he was a tad overwhelmed. Did she need the comfort? Did she need him? His eyes searched the wall and ceiling, perhaps not really looking for a written answer, but to seek an answer from somewhere. A small, happy sound was released from the warm bundle against him and Raphael shut his eyes, pausing his search. Perhaps he didn't need to know. Perhaps he all ready knew.

He allowed himself to relax into her. He turned his face, snuggling closer still, holding onto the key to his heart. His mind calmed. His heart slowed. He melted against her and into the bed. Everything was right in the world. Another sound rumbled against his chest; she was stretching, yawning, and repositioning to further tangle herself with him.
Her fingertips traversed the lines of his plastron at his abdomen. Gentle scrapes of her fingernails felt like tickling touches and he struggled to remain still under her ministrations. She pressed her palms flat against him and explored his plastron up to his chest. Her fingertips curled around the edge of the hardened armor, finding the softer, exposed flesh.

Raphael let loose a breathy sigh. The slow dance of her fingertips felt like gentle, warm electricity. His grip on her tightened. His eyes cinched shut. What you do to me… You have no idea…

The skin around his collarbones wasn't like that enrobing the living marble muscle of his arms, shoulders and legs. It had few scales. It was supple, like fine leather. It was thinner. It was sensitive. April had discovered this delightful fact nearly by accident – she had simply explored his body with her fingertips after teasing him to be still. And now, whenever the time was fitting, and sometimes not, she took advantage of that knowledge to have Raphael's heart pound, his breath quicken, and his body tense all due to the gentle touch of her fingertips.

A deep, rumbling groan shook loose from Raphael's lips. He was quickly being side tracked from his short term goal. If he didn't stop her soon, he wouldn't be able to get much done – other than bring his beautiful girlfriend an orgasm after orgasm…

"April," he growled, his free hand resting on top of hers, pausing her soft exploration. He gazed down at her, hoping the steel in his eyes would echo his sincerity. "I need…"
"I know," she cut him off, and her mouth pressed to his fingertips. "I know. I'm sorry. I just… I missed this. I missed you. And you're… Ugh, Raphael… I want you. All the time. It doesn't matter how I'm feeling. I'm drawn to you." Her chin lifted, eyes shining with the need she felt.

Immediately, Raphael found his lips pressed to hers; he couldn't help himself. He fell into the kiss, her mouth, her arms, her scent; he surrounded herself with her. He felt equally drawn to her. But, being a mutant who lived beneath the surface, and being a ninja whom possesses a great amount of self-discipline, he was used to denying himself things he wanted and being denied. To have something he wanted not only be available - wanting him back as desperately as he wanted her - and the ability to let himself have it, were so rare in coinciding, it felt as though nothing could be more right and perfect.

April's hands gripped at his face. Her thumbs stroked over his cheeks. "Oh, Raphael," she sighed into his mouth, pulling away only slightly, the damp surface of her lips dragging ever so lightly upon his thicker, larger mouth. Her hands fell away, her breath brushing along his skin.

Through half-lidded eyes, Raphael gazed adoringly at April. His face, his heart, felt warmed with her very presence. The feelings that build up felt that thought they could burst from inside him, they swelled so powerfully. His hand tangled in her hair, threading it lazily over his abused knuckles. He had never felt anything so soft. He cupped her face, thumb grazing along the curvature of her jaw, basking in the soft, white glow of her. She leaned into his touch. His breath caught in his throat. This woman, this beautiful goddess, this brilliant being; she not only allowed him in her home, but into her heart. She invited his touch, enjoyed his dark green scale flecked flesh. She made him feel normal, accepted… loved. He couldn't lose her. He'd shatter into a million pieces. He'd never find himself again.

"April… I need to tell you. I need to say some things."

She turned into his hand, kissing his palm. Each and every one of her kisses were like little fireworks on his skin – it didn't matter how casual or how intimate. "I know," she whispered. "I have something to tell you, too."

"April, I'm sorry." His voice sounded thick, like he was struggling to swallow. "I said some things. Some hurtful things – wrong things. I didn't explain myself. What I should have said was… was that if you write that article, that one about Shredder and Sacks, April… they'll kill you. If you expose them, they'll hunt you down. They'll tear you apart. I don't… I don't think I could take that." He paused and took in a shaky breath. "I think…" He exhaled and closed his eyes, his voice strained. "I think… that it would destroy me from the inside out." His eyes returned to hers. They were wet, wide, and full of emotion.

Her mouth opened, her eyes searching his.

"D'ya see? April? Losing you. Losing you would end me." Another deep breath rattled through him. He swallowed hard, staving off the tears that had threatened to fall. "I gotta keep you safe. Y'understand? No matter what. But I can't be here with you all the time. I still gotta help my brothers. I still gotta help... Please, April? Please don't write that story. Please, let me keep you just a little longer."

April's lower lip wobbled. Tears fell freely from her eyes. "Raph." Her voice was a broken mix of soft cries and exposed emotion. "Raph, I'm sorry too." She moved to place her forehead against his, dripping her tears down his cheeks and nose. "I got so mad. I should have asked you to talk it out with me. I never should have made you leave."

Raphael began to reply and she shook her head, fingers curling around the edge of his plastron at his collarbones as she gripped him. “No. I broke my own heart when I did that. I had no idea how much it would hurt, not having you here, not hearing from you, missing you, worrying how you were, if you were safe… But I didn’t realize... The Foot. I wanted them brought to justice. I wanted them to pay for what they’ve done.” She let her anger melt through the emotion that clogged her throat, strengthening her voice. “But Raph, baby, I… I’m sorry. I was so mad. I’ve been there before… with someone who told me what to do. I didn’t stop… you’re not them. You’re not like anyone else. You’re wonderful. You’re perfect. I am so sorry. Please don’t ever leave me like that again, okay?”

He wasn’t entirely sure he was processing everything she was saying properly. He was listening to her, but did he actually hear all that? He stared at her, totally flummoxed and overwhelmed with emotion. He felt as though his heart and world had been set in fast forward for a moment. He closed her eyes and shook his head. “April. Listen. All this. It’s got me thinking.”

“Raphael…”

“April – I love –“ “Raph – I love –“

“I love you,” they echoed.

They paused. The moment grew; it filled the air with sparkles and magic.

April’s chin trembled. Raphael’s lips twitched. He captured her mouth with his, instantly finding a depth to a kiss that he had never before attempted. He breathed her in, tasted her, gripped her, held her. His hands tangled through her hair, slid down her shoulders, rubbed along her spine. He tipped his head back to breathe, feeling warmed from head to toe.

He tugged her on top of him as he rolled onto his back. He nipped gently at her lower lip, tugging it wetly from her teeth. He released it and smirked as he laid back, hands sliding down the shoulders and arms of his lover.

April looked mightily disheveled. Her hair was in a wild display. Her mouth was partially open, lower lip swollen from a suckling kiss. Her chest rose and fell with deep, uneven breaths. Her eyes were dark with the need that surged inside her, fed by the teasing turtle beneath her.

“Raphael,” she whispered, her voice thick as she swallowed, “Raphael, I love you. So, so much. Stay with me today? I don’t want to leave this bed. And I don’t want you to, either.” She smiled salaciously, her eyebrows wiggling suggestively. “Unless it’s to shower… Or eat… What do you say? Spend the day with me?” She traced whimsical lines along his plastron, her lashes batting at him playfully.

“Oh… m’god…” a rumbled groan resounded from deep within the turtle. The long limbs of his lady were rubbing along some tender areas and Raphael was finding it hard to do much more than keep his arms at his sides. “April… you know I gotta…”

“You gotta what? I’ll tell you what you’ve got to do today… You’ve got to show me how much you love me. But you’re gonna use your fingers… your lips… your tongue… your teeth… and your big, fat-“

Raphael growled shortly before he tugged her back down against him. He stole another deep, fast kiss. “You’ll get what I give you… and you’ll like it!”

April’s giggles soon turned more carnal, her soft pants becoming deep, gasping and needy breaths. Raphael stayed through the day… and the night.

A/N: So much MOOSH. Blah.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!